

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a Public Hearing on March 13, 2012 at the Wethersfield Town Hall, Town Manager's Conference Room – First Floor, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members Present: Robert Garrey, Chairperson
Michael Rell, Vice Chairperson
John Maycock, Clerk
Mark Raymond
Paul Courchaine, Alternate
Douglas Ovian, Alternate

Members Absent: Cynthia Greenblatt

Also Present: Kristin Stearley, Historic District Coordinator
Linda Messina, Recording Secretary

Commissioner Garrey called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, and read the opening comments. Commissioner Maycock, Clerk, read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the *Rare Reminder* on March 1, 2012.

APPLICATION NO. 4019-12. Lucas Kyriakos seeking to construct stairs with a railing for an emergency exit at the rear of the patio and to construct a pergola on the patio at 222 Main Street.

Lucas Kyriakos, 222 Main Street, appeared before the Commission. At this time, he will not present information on the pergola. He would like to add an emergency exit to the back of the patio. The landing width is 6', 3' x 6". The risers are 7". The construction materials are the same block that has been used on the patio. The rails will be black aluminum or wrought iron to match the front and side of the building. The stairs are concrete block to match the existing. There will be a walkway coming off the stairs that will tie in to the existing walkway from the parking lot to the patio. The walkway will be 4' wide.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 4020-12. Laura Saskal and Aaron Brenner seeking to replace an existing fence in the same material and design with an increase in height from 5' to 6' at 181 Garden Street.

Aaron Brenner, 181 Garden Street, appeared before the Commission. The existing fence fell over into the neighbor's yard. He would like to replace it with the same style, same footprint, but just increase the height from 5' to 6'. He would also like to change from Gothic to a beveled edge top to the posts. The fence will also be left unstained. It is a cedar fence. The gates will be in the same location. The good side of the fence will face the neighbors.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 4021-12. Nicole Ferrari and Damon Mitchell seeking to install a chimney cap for a gas fireplace insert at 25 Belmont Street.

Damon Mitchell, 25 Belmont Street, appeared before the Commission. He has a wood burning fireplace and the house is heated by natural gas, so he would like to insert a gas fireplace insert. He will need to install a chimney cap which is 4" square x 6 5/8" (height). The cap will have a black painted finish.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 4022-12. Great Meadows Conservation Trust seeking to construct a wood sign 7'4" x 5' at 160 Middletown Avenue.

Jim Woodworth, 5 River Road, appeared before the Commission. The sign has the info required by the DEP because of the grant received in order to purchase the property. The sign is made of wood with two posts and a board with routed letters. It has a small pitch roof made of either western red cedar or asphalt shingles in the color shake wood. The post is 7'. The sign is 4'. The posts will be pressure treated wood. The sign will be rough sawn oak. The sign will be located on the corner of Middletown Avenue and Maple Street, facing out toward Middletown Avenue. The letters would be routed, then the painted. He is not sure which color they would paint it yet, but possibly tan or dark green.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application.

Bruce Crane, 180 Middletown Avenue, spoke against the application.

Commissioner Garrey asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 4023-12. Bruce Daly seeking to retain the demolition of concrete steps and the installation of vinyl lattice around the foundation at 223 Garden Street.

Applicant was not present and asked that the application be continued to the next meeting.

Upon motion by Commissioner Raymond seconded by Commissioner Maycock, and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to close the public hearing on all applications except application number 4023-12 and open the public meeting.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

APPLICATION NO. 4019-12. Lucas Kyriakos seeking to construct stairs with a railing for an emergency exit at the rear of the patio and to construct a pergola on the patio at 222 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Raymond and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the exception of the pergola and with the following stipulation:

1. The railing for the patio emergency stairs shall match the railings at the front of the building in materials and design.

Discussion

Commissioner Garrey stated that the existing structure has exit railings that are wrought iron. He would have had a hard time trying to say what would be the appropriate wood railing to propose, but there was no application for that anyway. The tubular railing isn't appropriate for a historic building anyway or off that patio. The wrought iron is a good compromise.

Commissioner Maycock stated that this is something he needs to do to meet code. Normally he would vote for wood railing, but since there is so much wrought iron there already, it will tie it all in together.

Commissioner Raymond stated that he likes the wrought iron idea.

Commissioner Ovian stated that wood would stand out a lot more.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

APPLICATION NO. 4020-12. Laura Saskal and Aaron Brenner seeking to replace an existing fence in the same material and design with an increase in height from 5' to 6' at 181 Garden Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Rell and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulation:

1. The good side of the fence shall face out towards the neighbors.

Discussion

Commissioner Garrey stated that the Commission has seen this design before. It's been there for a long time. It's a very nice property. It's not such a drastic change in height, 5' to 6', plus you're losing the Gothic posts.

Commissioner Rell stated that the curvature of the fence, even though going from 5' to 6', you still get that lower look to it, so it's not that drastic of an impact.

Commissioner Ovian stated that the curved tops are consistent with the Tudor style of the building. Typically, a fence of that height is tended to be a standard privacy height fence that is acceptable in districts, so you see a lot of 6' fences. You don't see many that are taller than that. The ones that you see that are shorter than that are because of sight lines and are meant to be in areas where you are not trying to provide privacy.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

APPLICATION NO. 4021-12. Nicole Ferrari and Damon Mitchell seeking to install a chimney cap for a gas fireplace insert at 25 Belmont Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Rell and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulation:

1. The chimney cap shall be painted matte black.

Discussion

Commissioner Garrey stated that the proposed cap is symmetrical and proportional to the chimney.

Commissioner Maycock asked for guidelines regarding chimney cap codes from the Building Department.

Commissioner Ovian stated that certainly because there's just one flue it looks like a cap for the whole chimney so it's less intrusive than some, so it would be a successful application.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

APPLICATION NO. 4022-12. Great Meadows Conservation Trust seeking to construct a wood sign 7'4" x 5' at 160 Middletown Avenue.

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulations:

1. The color of the lettering shall be either tan or green.
2. The roof shingles for the sign shall be wood cedar shingles.

Discussion

Commissioner Garrey stated that the roof on the sign reminded him of the signs that you see in state parks. It's a natural design to him. He was kind of surprised by the neighbor's concerns because when you look at the size of the parcel and the size of the sign in natural wood, he can't imagine that it would look that large. He's not sure if you could make the sign much smaller and have it be meaningful. HDC has always discussed coloring of letters on signage.

Commissioner Rell stated that he thinks that the sign is set far enough back from Middletown Avenue and that it would blend in naturally to the backdrop of the trees that are there and even past the trees to the meadows so it will actually blend right in. He doesn't think that it will look like a "For Sale" sign. It's not painted white or yellow, so it does blend. If the Conservancy was seeking to put in a pavement parking lot to attract more cars and have ample parking, that would be something to be concerned about, but a 7' x 5' sign in natural wood is discretely masked by its surroundings lends itself well to what is trying to be achieved.

Commissioner Courchaine stated that he was always under the impression that the Historic District did not have jurisdiction over color. He also has a concern since the town has spent money going through the process with directional signs to make uniform signage in town. There are a multitude of signs throughout town and yet another kind of sign is being introduced introducing for the Great Meadows Trust.

Commissioner Raymond stated that maybe the volume of people that it's going to attract is one of the neighbor's concerns.

Commissioner Ovia stated that he has a couple of concerns. He's really excited that their properties will have more visibility and he is also sympathetic to the concerns of the neighbor, but that property is vast. The right sign there could really advance the cause of conservation land in the area. Not sure if having the roof on this sign will make it more or less visible in some ways. He doesn't want to micromanage the design of the sign, but flexibility in the approval should be granted or an invitation to come back for modification. It's something of a work in progress.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

EXTENSION OF EXPIRATION DATE

James Ohanian of 327 Middletown Avenue seeking an extension of the expiration date for Certificate of Appropriateness number 3906-11 to October 31, 2012.

Upon motion by Commissioner Raymond, seconded by Commissioner Rell and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to extend the expiration date for Certificate of Appropriateness number 3906-11 to October 31, 2012.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2012

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Rell and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the minutes of the February 28, 2012 meeting as submitted.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

OTHER BUSINESS

Public comments on general matters of the Historic District

None.

Report of the Historic District Coordinator

Generators – There has been an increase in demand for the installation of permanent standby generators for homes within Wethersfield. These are units that sit on the outside of the house and look very much like AC units. Kristin has administrative approval for the AC units as long as they are shielded with evergreens. If the homeowner chooses otherwise, it has to come before the HDC. Would the HDC like to handle generators in the same way? It was determined by the Commission that, yes, generators should be handled in the same way as the AC units. They should be shielded with evergreens. If the homeowner chooses to screen with another material or to not screen, they must receive HDC approval first through the application process.

Correspondence

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Commissioner Maycock, seconded by Commissioner Rell and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 8:32 PM.

Aye: Garrey, Rell, Maycock, Raymond, Courchaine

Respectfully Submitted

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

John Maycock
Clerk